
Emergency Convention: The Fifth Convention of the Communist Party of America.

(An Unsigned Front Page Editorial of the Central Caucus Faction)

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The Emergency Convention of the CP of A, held January [7-11], 1922, represented the climax of the struggle to prevent the liquidation and destruction of the Communist Party as planned by those centrist and semi-centrist elements within the communist movement in this country. These semi-bourgeois intellectuals, who had become politically homeless with the breaking up of the Socialist Party in 1919, never felt comfortable in the underground Communist Party. For more than two years they had been seeking an opportunity to stab the young communist movement of this country in the back. Their intrigues with the Soviet Bureau here and their false representations to the Comintern are too well known to be recounted here. With the centrist cry for "unity" always upon their lips, they sought to unite with the CP of A only for the purpose of destroying it. Soon after the factitious unity of the UCP and the CP of A brought about by the Joint Unity Convention last May, 1921, the real purposes of these centrists became apparent. No sooner had they come into possession of the machinery of the "united" party, then they at once began to make overtures to their fellow centrists — Engdahl, Salutsky, Lore & Co. For six months following the Unity Convention, these traitors deliberately sabotaged all the work of the CP of A, destroyed its press, disrupted the foreign language federations, broke up the CP nuclei in the unions, and by conducting a carefully planned campaign of slander against the leaders of the Bolshevik faction of the CP of A succeeded in partially breaking down the discipline and morale of the party.

After six months of this sort of preparation these traitorous centrists felt that the time was ripe to reap the fruits of their campaign. With all the machinery

and funds of the CP of A in their possession and its membership helpless (as they thought), they carried out their coup and launched the Workers' Party, thus uniting into one camp all the menshevik elements in the American movement.

During this time the leaders of the Bolshevik faction were not idle. As soon as the purposes of the mensheviks became clear, caucuses were organized in every district under the guidance of a National Central Caucus, and the defensive battle to save the CP of A was begun. Up to the time of the issuance of the Joint Convention Call to organize a new party, the bolshevik caucuses in the CP of A confined their fight to preventing a split in the ranks of the CP of A by demanding the calling of an emergency convention and by exposing the plans of the centrists on the former CEC. The seven traitors on the former CEC had secretly conspired with the centrists outside the party and had jointly issued their call for the formation of a new party to be known as the Workers' Party. By this act the centrist leaders and all those who were misled by them had left the CP of A and the Central Caucus issued a call to all districts to hold elections for sub-district and district conventions and to elect their delegates to a National Conference of the Communist Party of America, in order that the entire membership of the CP of A could take action in this emergency in which the very life and future existence of the Communist Party was at stake.

The Convention was held last January [7-11, 1922] with 38 delegates present, representing a membership of 4408. (This is a very conservative figure as subsequent reports to the CEC since the convention by Federations and districts show the present membership of the CP of A [*i.e. the party of the Central*

Caucus faction] to be more than 5500. The districts reported membership as follows: Dist. 1 [Boston] — 630; Dist. 2 [New York] — 1094; Dist. 3 [Philadelphia] — 445; Dist. 4 [Cleveland] — 338; Dist. 5 [Chicago] — 628; Dist. 6 [Detroit] — 515; Dist. 7 [St. Louis] — 125; Dist. 8 [San Francisco] — 30; Dist. 9 [Seattle] — 72; Dist. 10 [Western NY] — 228; Dist. 11 [Pittsburgh] — 256; Dist. 12 [Minneapolis] included in report of Dist. 5. This total of 4408 represented only those members of the CP of A who had participated in the elections and who had paid the convention assessment of 50 cents per member. The reports of the delegates showed that out of the former membership of 10,000, 5000 had remained loyal to the principles of the Comintern and to the CP of A [*i.e. the party of the Central Caucus faction*] — 2000 were “neutral” or undecided, while not more than 3000 members had left the party and joined the Workers’ Party [*i.e. remained in the regular CPA*]. The Federations reported on membership as follows: Jewish — 150; Lettish [Latvian] — 630; Lithuanian — 1100; Polish — 400; Russian — 900; Ukrainian — 1000. Total federation membership represented — 4180.

Immediately following the reports of the delegates the following motion was introduced: “That this body act as the emergency convention of the Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International.” This motion precipitated a general discussion in which the whole situation of our party, its past and future, was reviewed and discussed. Every delegate voiced his determination to maintain the continuous existence of the CP of A. Every delegate read the instructions which he had received from the rank and file members whom he represented to maintain our party at all costs and to keep up the fight to expose and discredit the American mensheviki and to drive them from their holes and thrust them out of the Comintern. Upon a roll call vote the motion was unanimously carried. After the debate upon this motion there could be no doubt as to what these delegates and this convention would do. From this time on its character and its purpose was determined. No self-appointed “leaders” could sway it from its aims; no clique or caucus could control it. Here was exemplified the revolutionary fervor of the comrades in the ranks who were making the real sacrifices for the communist movement; here was that elemental proletarian spirit, the

working class determination to surmount all obstacles that carried the Russian Revolution through to success and established the first Proletarian Government. Here were no professional, bourgeois intellectuals but instead men fresh from the grime and smoke of the factories; men who are at grips with everyday struggle of the workers. No “machine” could steamroller this convention as was done at the centrist Workers’ Party convention. The delegates of the CP of A had come to solve their own problems — not to have them predigest by “fighting leaders” for them. The party intellectuals and careerists had deserted us in the fight as they had so often done before, and the delegates realized that out of the body and bone and blood of the proletariat must come the future leadership of the Communist Party in America.

The Secretary of the National Central Caucus made a complete report and read extensive extracts from the CC minutes. This report was unanimously adopted after considerable discussion. The financial report of the Central Caucus was as follows: Received — \$1339.19; Paid — \$920.24; Balance — \$418.95. No officers were paid by the CC and after auditing by the Financial Committee the Convention accepted the report.

A lengthy report of the three minority members of the former CEC (Moore [John Ballam], Henry [George Ashkenudzie], and Dobin [Charles Dirba]) was read and adopted.

The committee on legal work brought in an outline of a plan for legal organization which was adopted as reported by the committee with minor changes. The discussion which developed in considering this plan and the unanimous vote by which it was finally adopted give the lie to the accusation made by the mensheviks that the CP of A is a leftist and sectarian party. The problem of legal work was taken up in earnest. Every delegate realized the necessity for establishing a legal organization through which the CP will maintain constant contact with the broad masses. The convention adopted a plan for a centralized legal organization to be the legal apparatus of the underground CP of A entirely under the control and direction of the illegal party by means of which the CP of A will unify and direct the workers in their everyday struggles; formulate slogans adapted to each immediate question agitating the workers; consolidate their movements

and convert their spontaneous actions into carefully planned struggle; and through its nuclei and its legal machinery the CP of A will identify itself with the masses of the proletariat in the unions, in strikes, in all their movements and struggles against their oppressors. According to the plan adopted by the convention the legal activities of the CP of A will be centralized in order to formulate and present practical plans for direct action and to teach the backward, vacillating masses how to fight and make a stand for the necessities of life; to lead the immediate struggles of the workers; promote their conflicts; and to form the centre and rallying ground for a wider mass organization through which the CP of A will win over the proletariat to the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in the form of Soviet power. This centralized legal organization will be the legal machinery of the CP of A — the directing centre of the workers' struggle — so constructed and controlled so as not to vitiate the program and the aims of the Communist Party, which will through its press, its nuclei, and all its illegal machinery, keep in the foreground the necessity for, and the inevitability of, the violent overthrow of the capitalist state through mass action and armed insurrection, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat based upon soviet power, as the only means to emancipate the working class from the horrors of capitalism and for the introduction of the Communist Society.

A complete plan for participation in the coming parliamentary elections was worked out and adopted by the convention. The CP of A will enter its candidates in the elections upon a working class program against the candidates of all other parties — through its special elections machinery. Again the malicious and mendacious charge that the CP of A is a leftist party was repudiated by the attitude of the delegates towards active participation in the elections. After a few minor changes the committee's report was unanimously adopted.

The Committee on Constitution brought in and presented many important changes which were adopted and are printed in this issue on another page. The discussion on the constitution was a lengthy one. The delegates had learned much from the mistakes made in the past and their self-criticism and their de-

termination to avoid and correct them in the future augurs well for the organizational life of our party. Much more power was placed in the hands of the District Conferences and the DEC's [District Executive Committees]. The changes were all in the direction of democratic centralization as contained in the Theses of the Third Congress. All officers of the party are elected including the DO's, who are to be elected by the District Conferences, subject to the approval of the CEC.

After a report on the YCL a resolution was adopted as an instruction to the CEC to the effect that all efforts should be made to develop the YCL; that it shall not be split upon party differences; and that the work in the YCL shall be conducted upon the basis of "organizational neutrality."

The resolutions adopted appear upon another page in this issue.

A former delegate to the Comintern elected at the Joint Unity Convention [Robert Minor] was admitted to the Emergency Convention to read a communication from the EC of the CI to the CEC of the CP of A. This was a long ten page document of a secret nature and ut the position of the CP of A [*i.e. the party of the Central Caucus faction*] on legal activities. The EC of the CI is unalterably opposed to the liquidation of the CP of A and commands the CEC of the CPA to call the convention of the illegal party [*i.e. the regular CPA*] before establishing the legal organization. The CP of A has accordingly conformed to the orders of the EC of the CI. It will not be long before the mask will be torn from the faces of our American mensheviks who have been masquerading as communists.

The Financial Committee reported Convention Receipts — \$2468.02; and Expenditures — \$1310.82; Balance — \$1157.20. On party wages the convention decided to pay single comrades without dependents \$25 per week; and married comrades or comrades with dependents \$35 per week.

The Convention elected a Central Executive Committee of seven; and five alternates to be called in a given order; and Auditing Committee of three and three alternates; and an International Delegate.

The Emergency Convention lasted five days and the delegates were in continuous sessions lasting from 11 am to 12 pm. The CP of A has held many conven-

tions but non in which more was accomplished or more serious and important in its nature. Let us be frank. The task that confronts our party is a colossal one. So-called leaders have deserted our party and have gone over to the camp of the mensheviki. We will remember them — those who have betrayed their trust — those who have deserted and gone over to the enemy for their own personal advantage. We are poor in trained writers, we have few intellectuals. But we are rich in enthusiasm and the determination to carry on the work of our party; we have many stalwart proletarian fighters. Out of our own rank, out of the bone of our bone and the flesh of our flesh, out of our own proletarian elements we must develop the trained leadership to fill the needs of our party. Upon these do we rely. We shall find and develop our editors, writers, speakers, and organizers, among the rank and file of the CP of A.

Every comrade must put his or her shoulder to the wheel.

On with our communist tasks!

All centrists have united in one party.

Let all communists draw together in closer unity.

The battle is on! Close the ranks! Build up the Communist Party of America. Strengthen the American section of the Communist International.

Down with the traitors and betrayers of the communist movement.

LONG LIVE THE PROLETARIAN WORLD
REVOLUTION!

LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF AMERICA!

LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST INTER-
NATIONAL!

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